

Chinquapin Organic Gardens Board Meeting September 20, 2022

The September 20 Board meeting was held via Zoom. Participants included: Richard Dorrier-Chair, Anne Saul-Vice Chair, Lori Hartmann-Secretary/Treasurer, other board members: Julie Le, Stacey Potosnak and Kathryn Long. Absent Board members: Ed Mensh, Elizabeth Charles and Brad Kukuk. Other gardeners attending: Gretchen Schreiber, Faatimah Muhammad, Scott Nelson, Dona Lee, Mary Connolly, Jennifer Bellandi, Deborah Levi, Zion Bezu, Sharon Vannucci and Kali Moody. Also attending: Maureen Sturgill, City of Alexandria Recreation Manager/Park Operations.

The meeting began at 7:03 p.m. There was a motion by Anne to approve the July 19 meeting minutes. It was seconded by Kathryn, and the minutes were approved.

City Report: Maureen reported that renewal notices had been sent out, and some replies have been received. The new Web-Trac system is going on-line soon, for easier sign up for city recreation events and facilities, such as plot rentals. She asked that we let her know when we need the lumber and stakes for the path maintenance. Anne reminded the gardeners that November 30 is the deadline for renewal, and for completing volunteer hours. Anne also noted there were three gardeners she knew of that gave up their plots, two due to moving. Scott noted that he was moving out of the area and was giving up his plot.

Volunteer Reports: Richard stated that he had found a company to fix the lawn mowers. One needed a new carburetor. He will use the company for the tune ups next Spring. Al will help with fixing the wheelbarrows, but some might not be fixable. Anne asked everyone to bring the broken wheelbarrows to the shed. Richard said the shed is the “hospital,” volunteers can fix them in the winter. The next project will be the large item trash removal and covering up vacant plots. Anne noted that four plots are vacant and are cleared, but they need to be covered with black plastic. Richard suggested sending a notice early in October to those who still need hours, with a list of chores.

Monitoring Report: The monitoring team conducted the third review of the season on July 30. Of the 173 rented plots, 119 had no violations. This is down from the 135 during the June 4 session and also down from the same period last year. Three plots showed no sign of activity and were very weedy, which is about the same as during the June session. Two were repeats from the June session, so the city gave the gardeners two weeks to clean up their plots or forfeit them. One of those fixed his plot and the other gave it up. Of the remaining plots, 31 were cited for weeds, although some were fairly minor and 11 for path maintenance. The weed citations were up substantially from the June session and for the same period last season, but the heat likely was a factor. The next monitoring session is scheduled for Oct. 15.

Food Bank: Stacey reported that the food bank collections will continue for the next few weeks. Although there has been a decrease in amounts collected, that is to be expected at this time of year as the growing season winds down.

Dale May Memorial Grove: Faatimah and Richard gave a report on the Grove. The perennials are looking good. The pumpkins are done for the season. Faatimah said gardeners are still asking for volunteer hours work and that she is filling up her slots for tree grove maintenance.

Plot Markers: Kathryn reported that her crew is working on the plot markers and they are ready to be installed

Mowing: there are some new mowing volunteers and mowing is continuing. Richard has starting using some of the backup mowers, people who need to get their volunteer hours.

Finances: We have \$1,043.52 in the bank.

Summer Picnic recap: Anne counted about 45 people and thought the picnic went well. Julie reported the raffle was a success, we collected \$308. Faatimah suggested bringing in more tables next year, maybe rent tables for serving the food? Richard thought he might be able to borrow some from his church or the rec center. Lori suggested alerting the gardeners who win awards to let them know they will be getting an award (although not the specifics) at the picnic. Richard noted it was nice that one city council member and the vice mayor attended, it was a good photo op for the city council members so we should encourage participation by the gardeners. He will update the picnic supply spreadsheet for next year.

New Business: Earthbrew compost will be delivered mid-October. Richard would like the Board to purchase some for the raised beds in the Grove, it is good for the pumpkins. He suggested 2 cubic yards at \$120 (if we carry it). He told the food bank that if they want some to let us know. Dona said that last year it was donated by Sharon Vannucci and Ed Mensh. She thought they would only need one cubic yard, which would be \$75 if delivered to the plot. The Board voted unanimously to purchase three cubic yards as described above.

Lori noted that a couple of gardeners complained to her about recent thefts where the person had unlatched a gate and entered a plot, and had taken large items -- pumpkins and watermelons. She asked if additional signs, in other languages, might be added by the city. Julie noted that someone had cut branches off her fig tree. Richard noted that there is not much we can do about it. Anne recommended approaching the person and inquiring nicely, what plot is yours? If they cannot answer, tell them not to take anything and explain that the plots are paid for by the gardeners not to be taken by others without the owners permission.

The meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Upcoming events:

October 15 – garden monitoring

October 18 – next Board Meeting

November 15 – Board Meeting – confirm board members

December 3 – end of season garden monitoring

No December Board Meeting